

PORTFOLIO OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS

NAME: **STEPHEN FOWLER**

OUTPUT TYPE: **ARTIST RESIDENCY**

OUTPUT NAME: **MINNESOTA CENTER FOR BOOK
ARTS S.HELME & W.GAGLIONE RUBBER
STAMP ARCHIVE'S RUBBER STAMP ARTIST
RESIDENCY**

DEPARTMENT: **ARTS**

(Key line summing up research project/ value.

May be adapted from keywords or 300 word statement)

RESEARCH PROCESS

- From exploring the distinctive characteristics of DIY hand carved rubber stamp I wanted undertake an investigation into the nature of rubber stamps made for the commercial market.
- I was particularly interested in exploring American rubber stamps, from the past to the present, from 'toys' to businesses, documentation to education. Each have their distinctive qualities, creatively ripe for use in different contexts and/or combinations. Different from the limitations of the 'robust' John Bull printing sets of the UK and the studious quality of French School Stamps. American stamps have less 'character' and so more open to transformation when taken from their intended use. I undertook an explorative route, stamping intuitively; creating unintentional relationships and meanings, from playful to the unsettling for example.
- I was invited to be the first rubber stamp artist in residence at the worlds largest rubber stamp archive at the Minnesota Centre for Book Arts, in North America, and to run some alternative stamping workshops for their Biennale.
- I was part funded by the Art Workers Guild, London.

RESEARCH PROCESS



MCBA S.Helmes & W.Gaglione
Rubber Stamp Archive room
(2017)

Minnesota Center for Book
Arts USA

This is where my practice
research took place. The
cabinets and boxes
contained over 70,000
stamps and stamp related
materials

RESEARCH PROCESS

The contents of cabinets and boxes from
MCBA S.Helmes & W.Gaglione Rubber
Stamp Archive (2017)

Rubber Stamp Archive room,
Minnesota Centre for Book Arts,
USA

French Educational Rubber Stamps
(left) Picasso Gaglione's DADA
Stamps

I was allowed complete access to
the collection to document through
stamping, the contents of the
archive and create original art works



RESEARCH PROCESS

SPAM rubber stamp and various stamp impressions (2017)

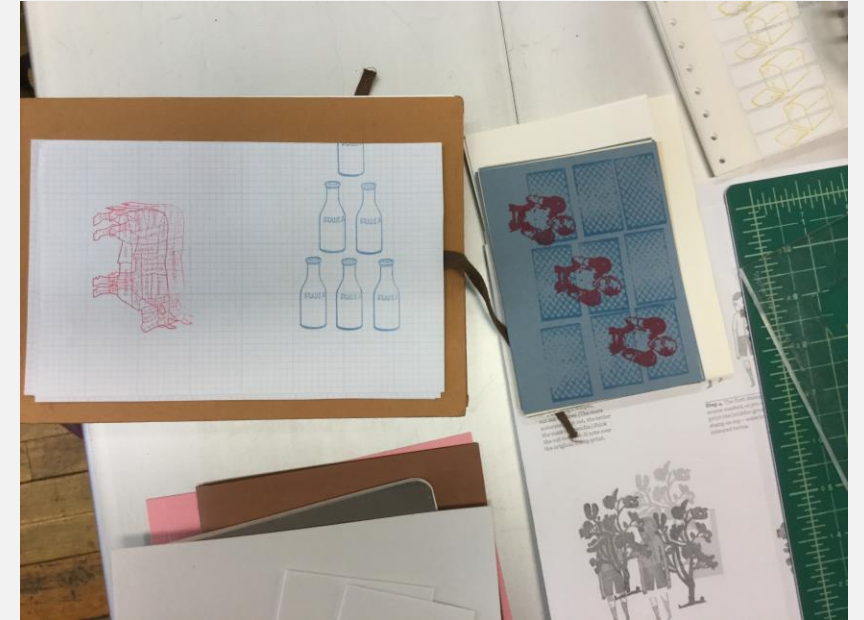
Minnesota Center for Book Arts
Rubber Stamp Archive room

Rubber Stamp, various stamp
impressions on assorted paper

Evidence of unearthing curious
stamps from the collection, and
beginning to juxtapose various
stamps from different decades and
countries



RESEARCH PROCESS



Pre-Biennial Workshop: Alternative Printmaking with Rubber Stamp materials & participants creative outcomes (2017)

Minnesota Center for Book Arts USA

(left to right) Various boxes of rubber stamps from the MCBA Stamp Archive, artistamps, artist book/zine of stamp impressions

Part of my residency I ran a two-day rubber stamp workshop with the public, the participants learnt how to make their own stamps from erasers, be inspired by the rubber stamp archive and incorporate them into their creative outcomes. This gave me an opportunity to see the archive through others eyes and understand the potential of combining commercial and DIY stamps.

300 WORD STATEMENT

- I was the first artist to be invited to work with Minnesota Centre for Book Arts newly acquired rubber stamp archive. The archive consists of over 70,000 stamps, and stamp related artefacts, donated from two significant and respected artists; from the concrete poetry, Fluxus, mail and rubber stamp scenes of the 1960s and 1970s; Scott Helmes and 'Picasso' Gaglione.
- Building on the work completed by the MCBA's volunteer cataloguers, I sought to make a visual catalogue representation of the archive, through printed impressions of the stamps, and in doing so it became a 'working archive'; the original aim of the centre's archive.
- I was particularly interested in investigating the many commercial applications of American rubber stamps in the areas of education, toys/games, business, authority and documentation for example. I, being removed from American culture, coming from a UK DIY hand carved rubber stamp tradition, had some freedom to work with and change the original meanings and intentions of the stamps through experiential creativity and play; juxtaposing, overlaying stamps from different contexts, and eras.
- Encouraged by MCBA's curator Jeff Rathermel and Scott Helmes; I explored stamping composition and sequence through making a small edition of stamped artist books/zines; called 'Stamps' and 'KUNTERBUNT IV'. (The latter book, being included in a collection of books curated by Helmes called, 'VIVA', which will be sold to international artist book collectors and museum/galleries collections).
- The stamp sets as artefacts became of interest to me, the box size, packaging; type and image/illustration, the design and stamp selection, be it, subject matter or font for example, and who they are aimed for. This fascination was enabled to be expressed when I was commissioned by MCBA's trustees to make a set of stamps for Jeff Rathermel.
- I edited my stamp compositions created in the archive, and with the art direction of Craig Atkinson, these were reproduced in a small book and included in an artefact box of badges, and original artist stamps published by Atkinson's Café Royal Books, launched at the international artist book event BABE, at Bristol's Arnolfini Gallery.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The outcomes relate to an exploration into the worlds largest public archive of rubber stamps. Only very recently donated by S.Helmes and W.Gaglione.

I was the first artist to work with the archive, creating works exploring the creative potential of this North American archive through re-contextualization, juxtaposition and overlay in limited edition artist books & zines, and an explorative workshop for the public.

The outcomes have been disseminated via a box/book for Café Royal Publications, an international symposium, exhibitions, book launch at international artist book fair, specialist magazines and websites. One off original artifacts were created; a stamp set and artist book of 'found stamps' – of which is hoped will be part of an international institution collection.

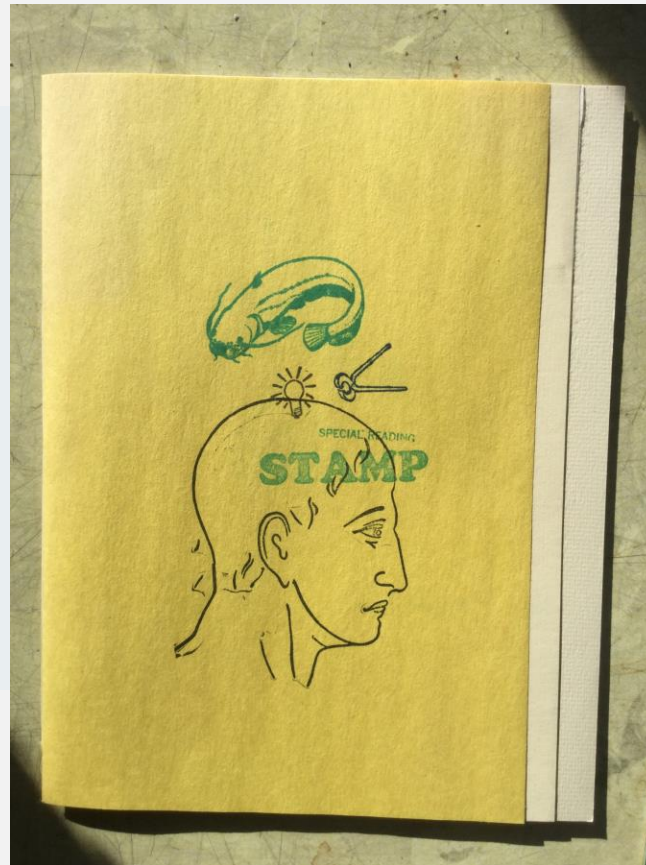
RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Name: Stephen Fowler

'Stamp' limited edition rubber stamp artist book (2017)

Jeff Rethermel (MCBA curator) and Picasso Gaglione both received a copy of 'Stamp'

This book was produced during my residency and completed with my own archive of stamps back in the UK. It explored the unexpected meanings and associations of multiple image impressions on the page and sequences through the book



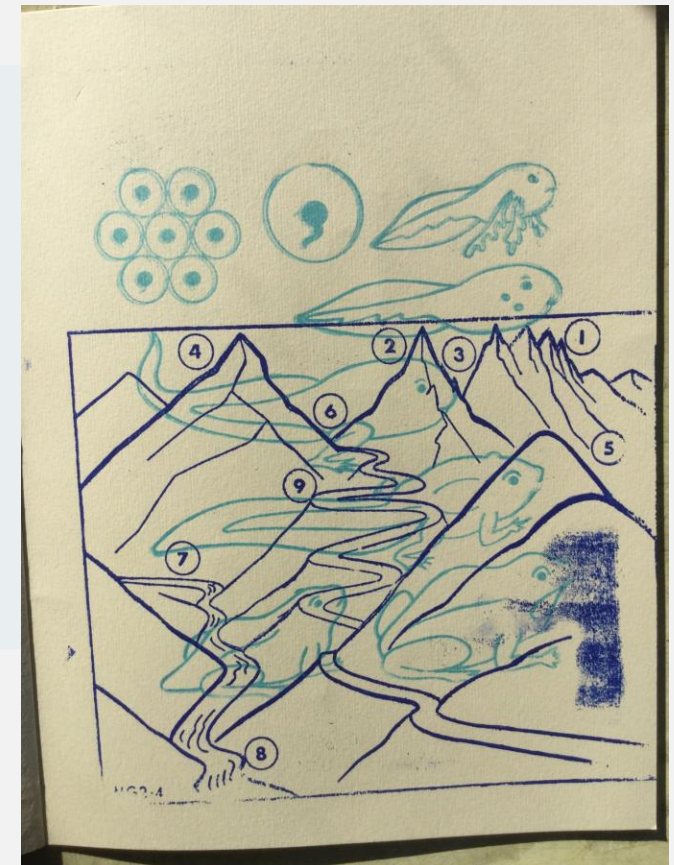
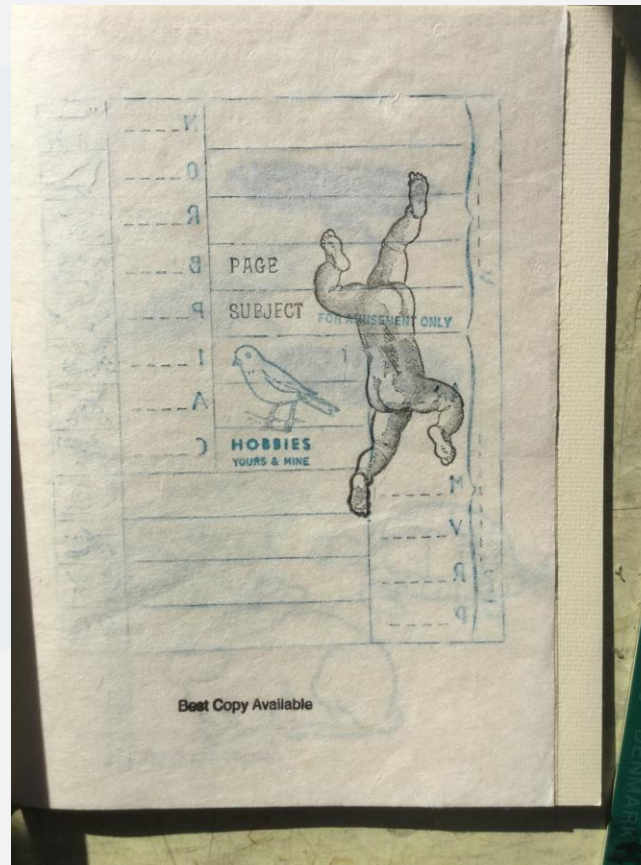
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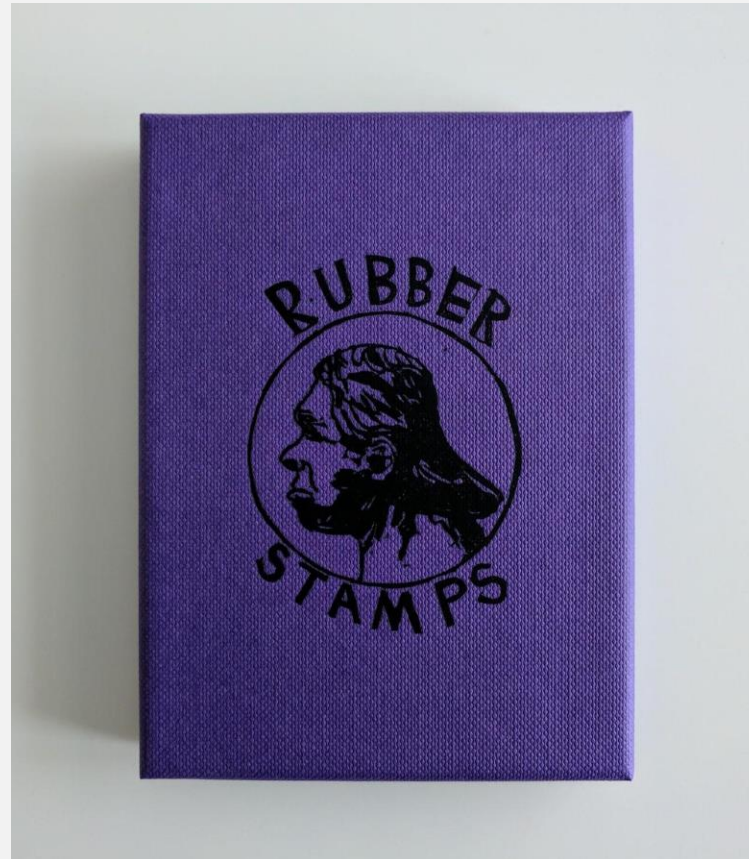
RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Name Stephen Fowler

'Rubber Stamps' (2019)
edition of 50 boxes 11 x 8
x 1.5cm

Contents: 32pp zine, b/w
digital a selection of hand
made prints and badges

Café Royal Books published
the outcomes created during
the MCBA Rubber Stamp
Archive residency, allowing
my work to be distributed &
giving access to the stamp
archive further afield



RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Name Stephen Fowler

Kunterbunt VI (orange book on left) part of Viva Art Book Series 21-30; a collection of artist books made from hand towel paper curated by artist Scott Helmes.

<https://www.abaa.org/book/1083600968>

<http://www.vampandtramp.com/finepress/s/s-tamp-pad-press.html>

Whilst visiting the archive I was invited to collaborate with Scott Helmes (one half of the rubber stamp archive) we learnt from each other and made various stamp artworks, Kunterbunt VI was part of the work made; a one-off artist book comprising of found stamp print impressions (made from kitchen utensils)



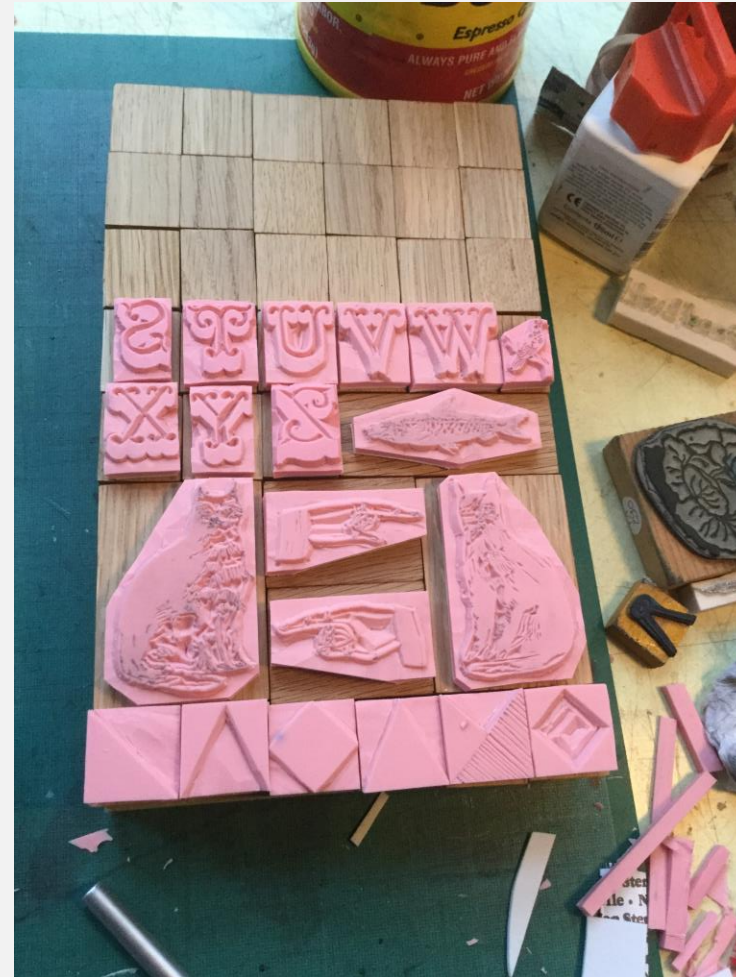
RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Name Stephen Fowler

Alphabet Stamp Set (2018)

Hand Carved Rubber Stamp Set mounted on wood

Inspired by the many stamps sets within the MCBA Rubber Stamp Archive I created this one off set for the archive curator Jeff Rathermel. It was commissioned by the center's trustees as a gift marking and celebrating Rathermel's work for the center



FURTHER EVIDENCE



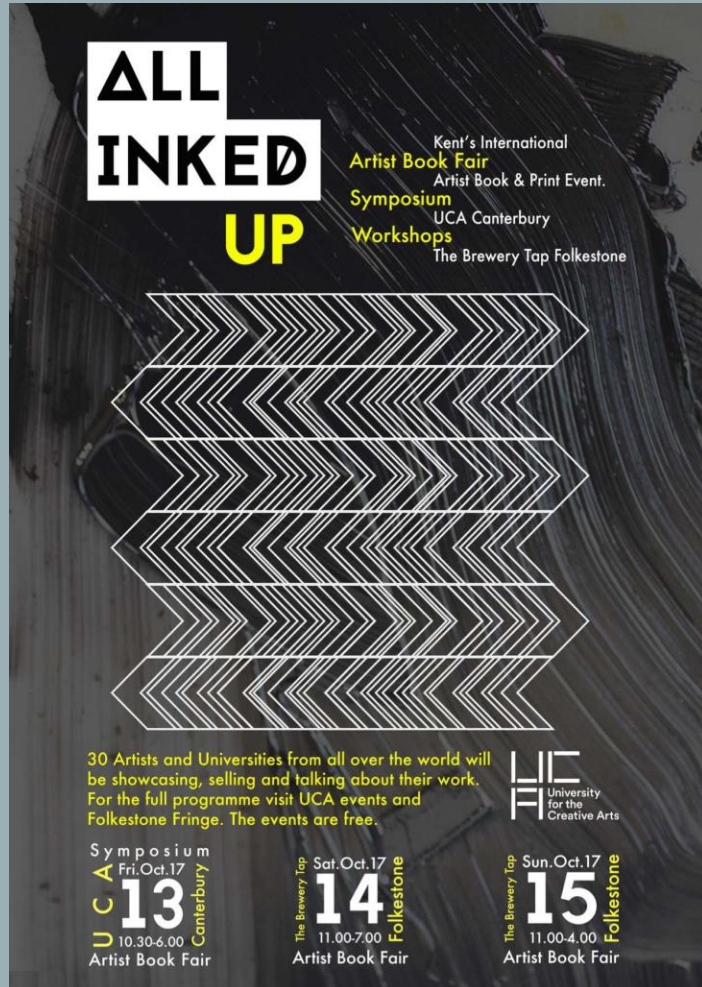
- **Exhibitions**
- Café Royal Publishing launched 'Rubber Stamps' at B.A.B.E (Bristol Artist Book Event) Arnolfini, Bristol (2019)
- 13,000 visitors to the Book Fair
<https://www.arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/babe-at-arnolfini-2019>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Exhibitions**
- Table Top Museum, Art Workers Guild, London 23/09/17 visitors; approximately 800.
- *An inventive celebration of the madness and the individual and extraordinary rules of those who collect, curated/organised by Bro. Stephen Fowler and PM George Hardie*
- As well as organising this event of over a dozen different table top museums, I exhibited the 'Stephen Fowler Rubber Stamp Archive'; inspired by the S.Helmes & W.Gaglinoe Rubber Stamp Archive at MCBA

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Symposium**
- All Inked Up 13/10/17
- <https://www.uca.ac.uk/galleries/gallery-events/all-inked-up/>
- I was the keynote speaker, workshop leader and exhibitor at 'All Inked Up' international print symposium and artist book fair organized by and situated at the University of the Creative Arts, Canterbury.
- I discussed and presented my practice based research into rubber stamping and findings from the MCBA Stamp Archive

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Magazine Articles**
- Pressing Matters Issue 4 (2018)
- *Making an impression* by Stephen Fowler
- I discussed my MCBA Rubber Stamp Archive artist residency, and its inspiration for the instigation for my own stamp archive, some of which was featured in the article.
- <https://www.pressingmattersmag.com/shop/issue-four-pdf>

FURTHER EVIDENCE

- **Websites**
- Artist News Letter. Artists Books #21:A British invasion at the Minnesota Book Art Biennial 2017 <https://www.artnews.co.uk/news/artists-books-21-british-invasion-minnesota-book-art-biennial-2017/>
- Jackson's Interviews and Features: Artist Interview by Julie Caves <https://www.jacksonsart.com/blog/2017/07/07/stephen-fowler-printmaking-with-rubber-stamps/>
- Fine Books & Collections. MCBA Book Art Biennial Amplifies Individual and Collective Voice <https://www.finebooksmagazine.com/news/mcbs-book-art-biennial-amplifies-individual-and-collective-voice>
- MCBA Book Art Biennial Symposium Pre-Biennial Workshops <https://www.mnbookarts.org/book-art-biennial-2017/#more-13515>

PORTFOLIO OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Please use the following slides to put together a portfolio of evidence for each of your research outputs between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020

NAME **STEPHEN FOWLER**

OUTPUT TYPE: **PUBLICATION**

OUTPUT NAME: **RUBBER STAMPING: GET CREATIVE
WITH STAMPS, ROLLERS AND OTHER
PRINTMAKING TECHNIQUES**

DEPARTMENT: **ARTS**

(Key line summing up research project/ value.

May be adapted from keywords or 300 word statement)

RESEARCH PROCESS

- Following several years of independent practice based research into the rubber stamp printing process, and an extensive national workshop profile in public galleries and museums, art schools and universities I was approached by Laurence King Publishing to propose a publication on rubber stamps, the publisher, inspired by the 1980s book; 'Rubber Stamps and How to Make Them' by George L. Thomson, wanted an up-to-date practical guide on the subject.
- Inspired by the free DIY nature of the printing process I sought to make a book that explored and conveyed the medium's distinctive character through examples, case studies from the past and present day, to projects and easy to follow step-by-step instructions.
- It was important to undertake because there hadn't been a publication since the mid 1970 (the height of the Fluxus and the International Mail Art scene, and the transition to a popular crafting craze in the US) to fully explore the medium, although in the 1990s an American University published a (small edition) research publication on Rubber Stamp Mail Art Groups and the renewed interest in the field. My research sort to explore the process's past and the contemporary stamping scene, and its place in a post digital DIY image making culture, and look to new outcomes created from the so-called limitations of the repetitive process which can be argued is not just a means of reproduction, but an art form in its self.

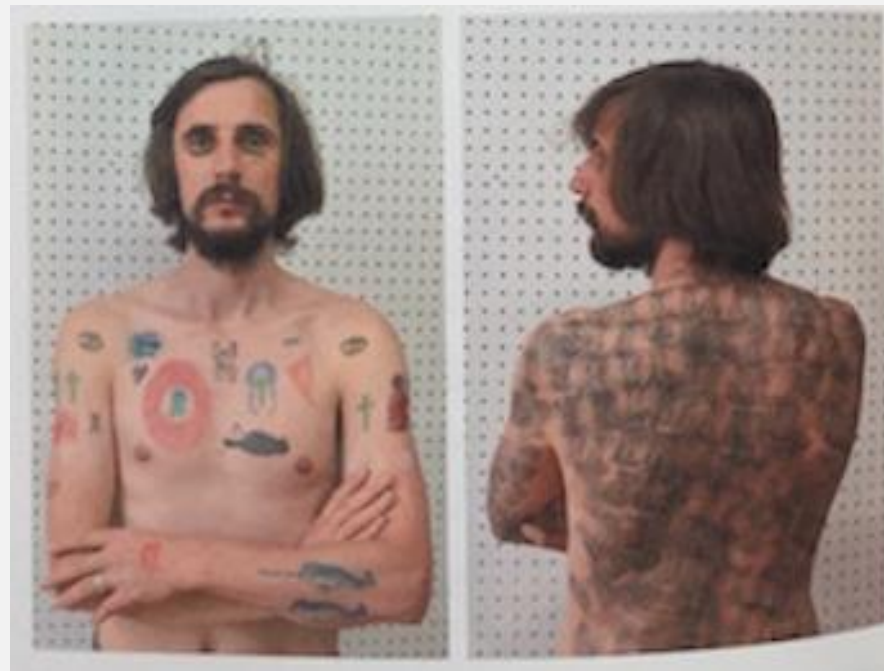
RESEARCH PROCESS



Practice based research into (primarily) rubber stamping, and roller printing, creative rubbings, clay printing, plaster, printing found stamps.

Public clay printing workshop with Banbury & Bicester College, in Banbury shopping center 2016

RESEARCH PROCESS



(left to right) Food stamping, stamping on bodies and mail art (2016)

Mail Art, response to Erasmus Field Trip, produced for UCA Farnham Illustration course publication

Rubber Stamps, Dye Stamp Pad Inks.

Research exploring unconventional contexts for stamping, and the tradition of Mail Art, a non-gallery art form.

RESEARCH PROCESS



(Left to Right) Bird Cage, Woman & Dog, Cosmic Forces.

Bird Cage; Rubber Stamp & Roller Print, Woman & Dog; Rubber Stamp & Ink Dye Pad, Cosmic Forces: Bleach, Rubber Stamps, Ink and Ink Dye Pad.

Exploration into the characteristics of rubber stamps, overprinting to produce unconventional images, colours, and the expressive 'spirit' like qualities of stamping and stamping with bleach.

RESEARCH PROCESS



Left to Right; Roller Printing, Creative Rubbings, Clay Printing

Place/site if appropriate: MA Print UWE (University of the West of England) , Primitive Print Public Summer School UWE, Printing in the City Public Summer School UWE harbourside Bristol.

Adapted Rollers and Scaffolding Foam, Assorted paper Brass Rubbing Sticks, Clay and Caligo Printing ink

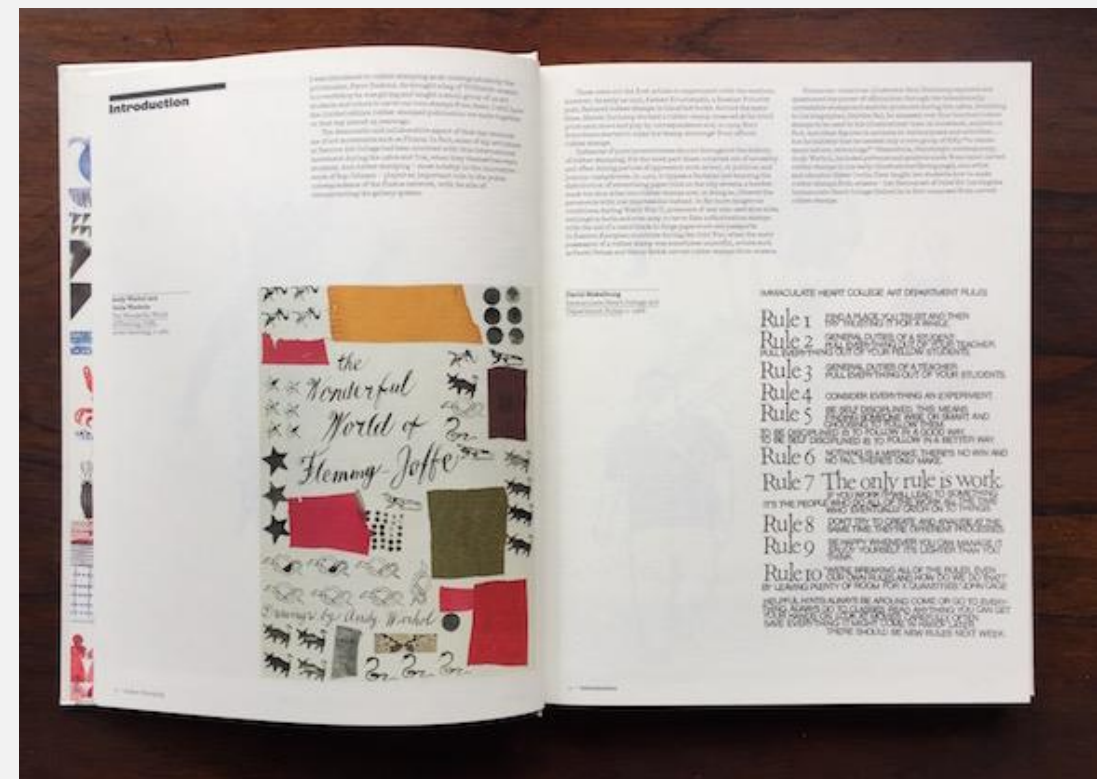
Working Collaboratively and individually exploring the characteristics and creative potential of a variety of 'primitive printmaking' processes

RESEARCH PROCESS

Left to Right; Natsuko Oshima, 'Tokyo Stamp' (2017)
Andy Warhol, 'The Wonderful World of Fleming Joffe' (1960)

Laser Cut Rubber Stamps,
Hand Carved Rubber Stamps

Research into stamping
practitioners past and
present, their aims and
outcomes.



RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Stephen Fowler Spreads from Rubber Stamping 2016

Pages explaining
various step-by-step
approaches and
processes to the
reader; Reduction
Printing, Over
Printing



RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Stephen Fowler Spreads from Rubber Stamping 2016

Pages explaining
various approaches
and processes to
the reader; Edible
Stamping, Stamps
with Handles



RESEARCH OUTCOMES

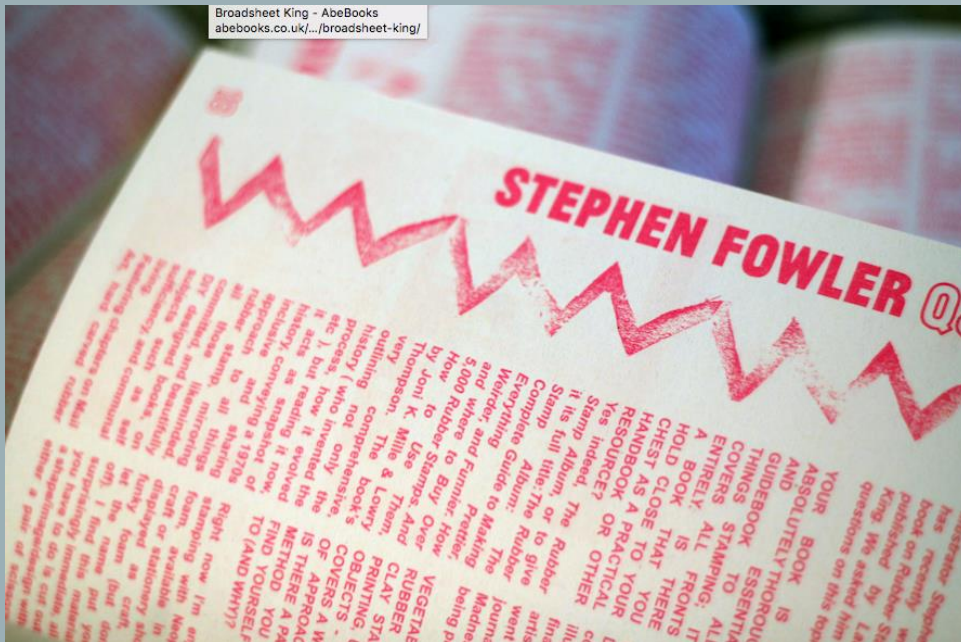
Stephen Fowler Spreads from Rubber Stamping 2016

Pages explaining
various step-by-step
approaches and
processes to the
reader, Mail Art,
Gigantic Stamps (by
Vincent Sardon)



FURTHER EVIDENCE

- **Further Publications**
- Printmaking Today Vol 25 No 4 Winter 2016 : Book Review
- BFR Autumn / Winter 2017: Interview <https://bfrmag.com/Issue-22>
- Idler March-April 2017: Book Review
- Craft Stamper, Publisher: Pocket Magazines: Interview & how-to-do project article early 2017
- **Radio Interview**
- 11/10/16 BBC Radio Bristol Steve Yabsley Interview; *Stephen Fowler, Britain's leading Rubber Stamp expert, who'll give tips on how you can easily make your own* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p048bz19>



FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **International Transformative Effects of Research Out Comes**
- **TOP Printmaking - Rubber Stamps – Get to know AHC McDonald brilliant work**
- *A lack of space for a press and a book picked up by chance led Western Australian comedian and photographer AHC McDonald to take on the neglected medium of rubber stamps, often taking his unique state prints to an extreme level.*
- *I was killing time in a bookshop, when I randomly picked up “Rubber Stamping” by English artist Stephen Fowler. The book is excellent and some of Stephen’s tips such as using post it notes as masks (genius!) are excellent. But even as I was reading the book, I was thinking bigger than the very small postcard sizes that stamp works are mostly known for. I immediately started planning a 4m wide stamp piece covering the five iconic beaches of my hometown of Perth Western Australia. This was basically the first thing I printed. <https://topprintmaking.com/rubber-stamps-ahc-mcdonald>*
- **Rubber Stamps & Rubber Wheels, Artist Mog Fry’s Workshop**
- *Thank you Lauren, Sophie and Gavin for your enthusiasm and adventurous creations! And thanks to Stephen Fowler for passing on these fab techniques! Stephen recently launched his wonderful informative book on all things rubber stamped!*
- <https://www.eightfivepress.co.uk/journal/2017/5/16/rubber-stamp-workshop-salt-cafe>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Selected Website Interviews and Reviews**
- Association of Illustrators Book Review by Simon Whittaker: <https://theaoi.com/2017/02/17/rubber-stamping/>
- Library Journal Book Review by Nanette Donohue <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?reviewDetail=rubber-stamping-get-creative-with-stamps-rollers-and-other-printmaking-techniques>
- Design Week Review by Aimée McLaughlin <https://www.designweek.co.uk/inspiration/rubber-stamping-stephen-fowler/>
- Amelia's Magazine Interview & 5 haves to get started in Rubber Stamping: <http://www.ameliasmagazine.com/art/5-essential-things-you-need-to-get-started-with-rubber-stamping-and-other-thoughts-from-artistauthor-stephen-fowler/2016/10/19/>
- ARLIS UK & Ireland Art Libraries Society Artists' – Books News, October 2016 <https://arlis.net/artists-books-news-october-2016/>
- **Online Public How-To-Do Workshop**
- Yodomo: Make DIY alphabet stamps with Stephen Fowler <https://courses.yodomo.co/p/make-diy-alphabet-stamps>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



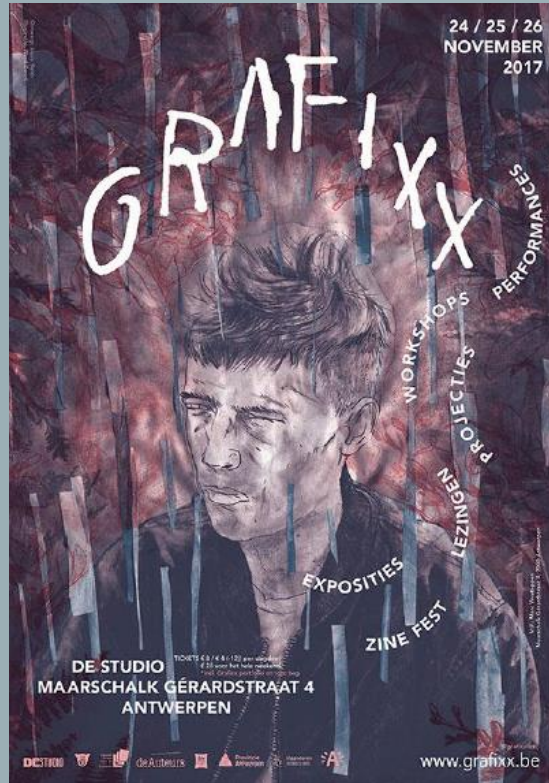
- **Gallery Workshop**
- Stephen Fowler (Public) Printing Workshop
- Arnolfini Bristol 17/09/16, attended by over 600 people.
- *Join printmaker Stephen Fowler for a drop in workshop in rubber stamp making and printing. Create your own rubber stamp, get printing and help us decorate the walls of the Arnolfini Foyer*
- *The afternoon workshop will be followed by a launch for Stephen's new book Rubber Stamping: Get Creative with Stamps Rollers and Other Printmaking Techniques, In the gallery bookshop.*
<https://www.arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/stephen-fowler>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Exhibitions**
- Hatched! The Hive Worcester
http://www.thehiveworcester.org/documents/Whats_On_at_The_Hive_January_to_April_2017
- Group exhibition of Worcester Illustration Lecturers, featuring; the Laurence King publication, and the Picture Books & Graphic Novels and by Piet Grobler, Becky Palmer, and Daisy Hirst. Original artworks and artifacts were exhibited.
- During the opening each Lecturer talked about their publications to an invented audience of University of Worcester staff, local dignitaries and students
- <https://worcestillustration.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/hatched/>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Exhibitions**
- Grafixx, an international graphic arts festival based in Antwerp visited by approximately 10,000 visitors.
- In response to my publication I was invited to run a weekend long drop-in workshop, I taught 600 people how to make stamps.
- *Stephen Fowler (UK) demonstrated how erasers can be used to stamp beautiful cards*
- [Grafixx.be/en/archives/](https://www.grafixx.be/en/archives/)
- <https://www.facebook.com/events/1186658534802401/>
- <https://weekup.be/festivals/20>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Printmaking Today Artists' Prints, Books and Multiples Vol 25 No 3 Autumn 2016**
- **King of Stamps** article by Sarah Bodman, Senior Research Fellow at Centre for Fine Print Research UWE & Multidisciplinary Printmaking Program Leader
- *Researching for his new book on rubber stamps, roller printing and plaster and clay print was a truly rewarding experience. Fowler says his new book is 'very much in the spirit of 60s and 70s Batsford art books – to share an open recipe rather than saying "you have to do it this way". Its about inspiring people with examples and letting them think how they will use the process; it's a beginning of something rather than an end'.*
- Link to the article <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/916991>

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **BOOK ARTS NEWSLETTER** ISSN 1754-9086
Vol 25 No 3 Autumn 2016 Published by Impact Press at the Centre for Fine Print Research, UWE Bristol, UK
- Rubber Stamping Book Review by Jeff Rathermel; the Executive Director of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA).
- *(the book) provides a wonderful overview of the amazing things that can happen when artists meet vulcanized rubber.*
- *(Fowler) concludes the book with examples and instructions for a variety of non-rubber alternative print processes. While rudimentary in their everyday applications, Fowler raises the unassuming practices of vegetable, clay, and plaster printing to new inventive levels.*
- Link to the article:
<https://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/pdf/newspdfs/106.pdf> page 52-53.

FURTHER EVIDENCE



- **Creative Review Magazine Interview 04/10/2016**
- **Let's Get Rubber Stamping!**
- *A new book by Stephen Fowler, out this week, will teach you everything you need to know to get into one of the most enduring craft trends: rubber stamping. We talk to him about what makes stamping so special. By Eliza Williams*
- *CR: What particularly appeals to you about the medium?*
- *SF: Its stunning diversity, and contradictory nature – it can be exclusive and inclusive in its application. Artists and illustrators play with its official form of visual language. For instance, Saul Sternberg questioned the power of officialdom through the intentionally unreadable stamps and seals he produced during the 1960s, whereas Jeremy Deller's use of rubber stamps at the Venice Biennale made everyone a part of the British Pavilion 2013 show*
- *CR: How did you first discover the joy of rubber stamping?*
- *SF: It wasn't until I, as a tutor, introduced it to my own students, that the lightning struck and I realized the diversity of the medium – then I was away producing all manner of things. It's true what they say – you learn so much through teaching. Both student and tutor are transformed by the experience.*
- Link to the article:
<https://www.creativereview.co.uk/get-rubber-stamping/>

FURTHER EVIDENCE

- **Awards**
- Shortlisted for the World Illustration Awards 2017 in the Book Category
<https://theaoi.com/wia/rubber-stamping-get-creative-with-stamps-rollers-and-other-printmaking-techniques-stephen-fowler/>

